

Mr. William Saunders

**THE SEA ISLAND HEALTH CARE CORPORATION
WAS A POWER BASE**

178 I think the housing, the health care facility, you have to look at it as an
185 elevation, an improvement. We had the foresight with the health center to
94 add the nursing home and the home for the elderly, so even when they took
734 your health center grant away from us, we owned the building and we owned
737 the property. The health center is now being run by the City of Charleston.
• (665) The taking over was really a political party fight. In 1980 the Republican party
needed to be able to say that they got something going on in the community,
so what they did, they found problems with a lot of stuff that was already
there—got rid of the Board, got a new Board, and allowed it to function.

185 Anytime you're talking about being able to control something, anytime
741 you're talking about power, then you're talking about something real that was
done. The Sea Island Health Care Corporation was a power base that we put
together that exists. It really exists today. We've got forty acres of very choice
land. The city now wants twelve acres of it. That's the kind of thing where
Eau and others were thinking ahead and did things in advance, and we
planned that one way ahead of everybody. And it's there. We've got control of
the nursing home and the housing.

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Mr. William Saunders

**THERE'S A LOT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
HEALTH AND POVERTY**

Our goal for the Comprehensive Health Center was that it would serve
everybody on the islands and would be totally independent. The first direc-
tor, Jim Martin, was a real strategist. He and I used to spend hours dreaming
and scheming about what could be, how you could work politically within the
system and make things work. Jim was a past master at that.

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(464) Beyond just providing health services, for awhile the Health Care Cor-
poration was the biggest employer on the island. We found that when people
were working, they were healthier simply because they were making their
own living. There's a lot of relationship between health and poverty.

741 We were looking to be able to sell health care to Kiawah and to Seabrook
758 and to the other big interests on the island, which would have actually made
743 the health center self-sufficient. You would not have needed any governmen-
(429) tal money. We were just about there when they took it away from us. We don't
have control of the daily operation of the clinic. But the people who are using
it have to pay us rent. It's a good bit less service than it used to be. But it
could come back. The whole facility is there, so the possibilities are un-
limited.

Mrs. Bernice Robinson

**ALL THIS IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PEOPLE
FEELING EMPOWERED**

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On Johns Island you see the results now really, the aggressiveness of the people and the confidence they had in moving forward, when you look at the sea island clinic, and you look at the senior citizen center and the nursing home and the housing project for senior citizens. All this is an outgrowth of people feeling empowered by being able to read and write and understanding how to go about pressing for things like that. They became very active in the PTA and things that they didn't bother with before because they couldn't read or they couldn't understand what was going down. Before they had a high school on the island, a lot of people who had relatives over here in the city would send the children over here to go to school, to try to get an education. And they had to do that for a long time before they got the high school.

But all these things that finally came about, came about from these same people that learned how to read and write and fight for their kids to get a decent education right in their own home rather than having to cross the bridge to come into town to get an education.

Mrs. Ethel Grimball

**WE'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES
WE WANT**

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People are still voting today. Blacks now rule Wadmalaw Island for the Democratic party. Before this, the white people in the Democratic party brought a slate in and then they immediately passed that slate. My father and others said, "We're not going to go along with a slate that they bring in. We're going to vote for the candidates we want." And that's how we changed that situation on Wadmalaw Island. After the voter registration drives, the people got more interested in the importance of voting. Therefore, we got a lot of people on the books. Eighty-five percent of the population on Wadmalaw is black. Most of the whites left the Democratic party when the blacks got control of it. Before that the whites ruled everything on Wadmalaw Island. It was the tradition.